



November 13, 2007

The Honorable Nick Rahall
Chairman
Natural Resources Committee
1324 LHOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Don Young
Ranking Member
Natural Resources Committee
1329 LHOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Opposition to H.R. 2176 and H.R. 4115

Dear Chairman Rahall and Ranking Member Young:

On behalf of the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, I want to express my strong opposition to H.R. 2176 and H.R. 4115. These bills would allow two tribes in Michigan to build casinos hundreds of miles from their existing reservations and on the ancestral lands of another tribe.

San Manuel firmly believes that off-reservation gaming outside ancestral lands is an issue that continues to undermine the legitimacy of Indian gaming and set a dangerous precedent. Last year you supported legislation that would restrict off-reservation gaming, and these two bills directly contradict the policy behind that legislation.

It is our understanding that H.R. 2176 and H.R. 4115 would settle a purported land claim and allow two tribes to build casinos over 350 miles from their reservations and on the ancestral and former treaty lands of another tribe. San Manuel has opposed efforts by two tribes in California and their non-Indian developers to conduct off-reservation gaming on our ancestral lands. Not coincidentally, the same "reservation shopping" developers, who are behind this effort in Michigan, are also behind the effort in California.

We strongly believe that tribal gaming is government gaming. If Congress were to allow tribes to sanction the acquisition of lands for gaming outside of their ancestral territories, it would undermine a basic premise of IGRA that gaming is intended to promote reservation economic development and not promote commercial gaming deals. These two bills further undermine compacts between other tribes in Michigan that require agreement of the other tribes for an off-reservation deal.

It is important that the House Resources Committee, the sole committee in the House with jurisdiction over Indian gaming issues, protect the integrity of IGRA for the

benefit of all tribes. I respectfully request that the Natural Resource Committee reject these two bills and instead continue to support legislation that would limit the proliferation of off-reservation gaming outside of ancestral lands.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Duro', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Vincent Duro
Vice Chairman
San Manuel Band of Mission Indians